



CHIEF's Sight Picture

28 April 2003

Enlisted Force Development

At CORONA Fall 2002, we adopted a new vision for how to best develop the airmen who will fight our wars and nurture our continuing evolution as an air and space force. Using this Force Development construct, we've begun to reshape training, education, and assignment experiences and now view them as integrated processes that provide officer, civilian, and enlisted leaders the tools they need to be most successful. Our goal is to employ a deliberate process to create and grow leaders capable of taking our Air Force to the next level of excellence -- leaders who instinctively understand how to leverage individual skills collectively to accomplish the mission.

In my travels around the world, foreign political and military leaders continually ask how we field such a talented, dedicated, and capable enlisted corps. Our enlisted corps is the envy of the world, and is a major reason we have emerged as the most respected air and space force on the planet. This is no accident. Over the years, we've invested heavily in our airmen -- in training, education, and benefits. We've reaped the rewards of these investments many times over, in war and peace. As we face new challenges, it's imperative we continue to evolve the processes we use to develop airmen. We must ensure our development opportunities produce the skills needed to remain the world's premier enlisted air and space force.

After in-depth deliberation with CMSAF Murray and other senior leaders, and following our officer and civilian constructs, we'll use training, education, and experience as the primary components of our development roadmap. We've already implemented several development initiatives, such as sending qualified enlisted members to our Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) to earn master's degrees. In the future, more enlisted men and women will attend AFIT. We are also developing ways to leverage the skills of those who already possess advanced education and examining how other educational programs could support Enlisted Force Development.

Other steps we're taking to move out on this vision include:

NCO Utilization Review: An important initial effort will be evaluating how we use our NCOs, and whether that use has kept pace with the realities of our expeditionary force. By clarifying the requirements and expectations we place on NCOs, we can target training, education, and assignments to more effectively prepare them for success.

Enlisted Training Assessment: We will evaluate our training processes to ensure our people have the tools necessary to meet demanding mission requirements. We are also assessing how to support force shaping, balancing, and sustainment initiatives by providing advanced training for those moving from overmanned skills to chronically short career fields. We'll

continue to expand expeditionary training to dispersed forces for contingency and garrison locations worldwide. We'll also look at how training assignments can help develop our force.

Enlisted PME Review: We will take a fresh look at enlisted PME -- its timing, content, and methods. Our objective is to make PME more responsive to the enlisted force's need to learn and discuss experiences with fellow airmen in preparation for more responsible positions.

Professional Development: On some bases, local leaders have established Professional Development Centers that combine airman, NCO, and SNCO orientations and professional development seminars in one facility, and help bridge the gaps between in-resident PME opportunities. We'll conduct an IPT to benchmark some of these excellent programs and explore ways to support other initiatives from the field.

CMSgt Assignments: Because our top SNCOs hold critical leadership positions, we have decided to realign the Chief's Group under the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office. For the first time all our key senior leaders -- general officers, Senior Executive Service civilians, colonels, and Chiefs -- will be managed within a single office. As we progress, we will be reaching down further into the force, looking for assignment strategies that will ensure we have the right people with the right experience in the right jobs every time.

Although our initial efforts are targeted toward our senior ranks, Enlisted Force Development will ultimately touch all ranks and all career fields. To keep abreast of our Force Development efforts, I invite you to visit our AF/DP's Force Development web site.

This is a major undertaking and is critical to our Air Force's future success. The time, money, and energy we invest in enlisted training, education, and experience will continue to pay us back many times over in mission success.

